PUNCTUALITY, SENSIBILITY, & DISAPPOINTMENT

Pleasing Stories;

FOR THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MINDS OF YOUTH.

BY EMILY OSPRINGE.

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PUNCTUALITY,

SENSIBILITY, & DISAPPOINTMENT,

Instructive and Entertaining

STORIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

WITH FINE ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:

EDWARD LACEY, 76, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD;

AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

PARLOUR STORIES.

No. XIII.

PUNCTUALITY.

The three children of a Manchester manufacturer had just grown to the age of observation, when the occurrences of this short and simple story took place. Their father was a man of very deep thought, and very great ingenuity. He scarcely ever rose from his bed in the morning, without having some fresh scheme in his fancy, to improve some part of his extensive and already excellent machinery. When he sat down to his early breakfast, he would often say, "My head has half the night been full of wheels, and they seemed to move each other in a better manner than I ever thought them able to do before. I must go into my model-office, and see if some farther improvement cannot be made in the works of the manufactory." While he was thus intent upon advancing his business and fortune, he was quite

as anxious to do his children good in other and better respects—to improve their moral principles, and render them truly good and great, as well as ingenious and rich.

Peel, his eldest son, named after the famous manufacturer, Sir Robert, asked him one morning at breakfast, how it was possible for him to think of making his manufactory more perfect than he had already made it?

"I do not, my dear boy," said his father, "think that my system is yet perfect, as you call it; but, supposing it to be better than every other in Manchester—to be, in fact, the best in the county of Lancaster—or, if you please, to be better than any other in the kingdom and the world—still it may be made far better by a method that I wish with all my heart could be employed; but it depends upon others as well as myself, and therefore, perhaps, it will be a long while before we can hope for it, if we may venture to hope for it at all."

The children, with their intelligent mother, were anxious to know what could be meant by this stretch of their father's active imagination. "If it depended at all upon us," said Mrs. Morely,

" your vision of improvement would soon be realized."—" Dear Papa," said Arkright, the second son, " do tell us if we can help you in the least degree, and all our little wits shall be exerted as much as possible."—" I'd sell my guitar, and my harp, and my grand piano into the bargain, if it would assist at all," said Marian, the only daughter: " but if we cannot do any thing towards your grand improvement, you can tell us what it is, and who are the other persons necessary for the purpose."

" I will explain to you, my dears," he said, " what I mean. Through last night's sleep, I dreamed of several new contrivances, some of which I could perhaps introduce entirely, others I could adopt only in part, and the rest might not be used at all. Now, I will suppose that twenty other manufacturers in this town dreamed of devices different from mine, with about the same power of putting them into practice. Each of my neighbours keeps his thoughts at present to himself, and I keep mine likewise confined in my own breast. Suppose, then, instead of keeping these things to ourselves, we were all to meet at proper times, and every one was to tell the rest what he

thought; and, when all the new thoughts were before us, suppose we were to blend them together, and form some of the best improvements we could out of the whole. If this was done once a month, by a hundred manufacturers of this county, or by a thousand manufacturers of this kingdom, what then might be the consequence! Do you think, then, that our machinery would not be wonderfully improved from its present *perfect* state?"

"O, Papa," said Peel, "how I love to hear you talk! you seem to stretch my mind by everything you say: I wish breakfast-time was an hour longer."

"There," said Mr. Morely, "you are wrong, Peel. If talking, and stretching the mind, as you call it, were all that we had to do, your wish would be good; but the action, Peel, must be suited to the word and the thought. But your wish reminds me of another use that I may make of my dreaming and devices. I would have my dear children not only ingenious, but correct and conscientious; and let me tell them, that there are innumerable excellences of a moral kind, existing among various classes of people around us, that

we should not allow them to keep to themselves. By proper intercourse, and careful observation, we should endeavour to make as many of these excellences as possible our own. This is a much easier task than acquiring the secrets of men's mechanical invention: they are able to keep their manufacturing devices and improvements to themselves; but their moral virtues shine forth for the benefit of others—for the benefit of all who will adopt them—for *our* benefit. There is a happy ingenuity to be exercised in moral as well as mechanical life, which I hope my dear children will always study and practise."

At this moment the clock gave warning to strike the hour of closing breakfast. Rising from the table, Mr. Morely said, "We are now reminded of one moral improvement, more allied to the machinery of life than perhaps any other; and, like the machinery of our manufactory, will always be found productive of advantage in proportion as it is strictly worked—I mean *punctuality*. Marian, we have three minutes for our morning song, and then let us away to our different tasks." The sweet girl had already reached her guitar—her Mamma was in an instant at the

piano—Peel took his flute—and Arkright and Mr. Morely joined with their voices in the following lines:—

> "Whate'er is noble, pure, refin'd,
> Just, generous, amiable, and kind,
> That may our constant thought pursue—
> That may we love and practise, too."

The clock struck before the last sound had died away, and the family separated till the hour of dinner.

As they were sitting down to dinner, a young distant relation from Liverpool arrived, whom they had expected and prepared for the day before. He had no excuse for neglecting to come when he had promised, or for coming when he was not invited, for his time was entirely his own; but he had unfortunately fallen into the habit of disappointing almost every friend he had, until either he had lost their friendship, or they had become indifferent to his company and his comfort.

"I ask pardon," he said, "for coming on the wrong day; but a few friends pressed me to ride out with them yesterday, and I consented before I remembered that I had an engagement with you."

"Having consented, then," said Mr. Morely, "you felt yourself bound, I suppose, to make good your consent by riding out with them. Pray will you kindly tell us whether you considered it a bond of honour or of truth?"—"Of both, to be sure!" said young Allons; "both, to be sure! I was bound by honour and honesty, too, to remain with them, after I had consented to accept their generous invitation."

"But how was it," asked Mr. Morely, "hat you felt yourself under no bond whatever to accept our—I suppose *un*generous invitation? Wanting in generosity, as it might be, it was at least given and accepted before theirs. The disposition to ride out with them might be greater than to dine with us; but the *bond* to dine with us was much stronger than to ride out with them, for the plain reason that it was given first."

This was a depth of argument that the shallow mind of Allons could not venture either to answer or understand. His affectation of wit was generally resorted to for relief from embarrassment. After some stammering apology, he smiled, and said, "O, you know that the last will and testament gives away the property. My old uncle

made three or four wills, I understand, and all against me; but the last was in my favour, and of course all the rest were waste paper."

Without replying to this stale joke, Mrs. Morely strove to render the dinner as comfortable as possible, only observing, that she should make no apology for placing before him the cold remains of what he might have partaken of hot the day before. "But this," said Mr. Morely, "is not the whole of Mr. Allons' misfortune. In little more than one hour, we must leave him alone. Arkright and Marian have promised to go over to their cousins; while Peel and I have engaged to walk in another direction. You, my dear, have also bound yourself by a promise to spend an hour or two with your sister in her illness. Mr. Allons will allow me to say, that we have all consented to these engagements, and are therefore obliged, in honour and honesty, to fulfil them. He will therefore be left alone, to amuse himself as well as he can, till the last steam carriage returns to Liverpool; that is, if he must go back to-night."

"O, that is indispensable," he exclaimed; "I must, indeed, return this evening, for I have

two or three engagements; at all events, one for breakfast, and another for dinner, that I would not break for all the world."

At this moment he took out his pocket-book, to write down the precise hour of the steam-carriage starting from Manchester; when, as he turned over the previous leaf, he grew pale, and murmured with evident mortification—"Now this is clever indeed! the breakfast and dinner engagements were for to-day, and it ran in my head all the time that they were for the day after I should be dining with you."—"They were for the day after you should *have been* dining with us," said Mrs. Morely; "and if you had been punctual to one engagement, you would have been so to the other."

"I have often heard it insinuated," said Mr. Morely, "that punctuality is not a moral virtue; but here is a proof, that the neglect of it may be productive, at least of the appearance, of moral vice. In a certain degree, it partakes of the evil of falsehood; and hence our friend is in the unhappy situation of a man who ventures upon telling a single lie—he does not reflect upon what an immense task he undertakes, for he is obliged

to frame twenty, perhaps a hundred, to maintain that one."

"I hope, however," said Mrs. Morely, "this false step of yours will be no serious inconvenience to any of the parties."—"Only to myself," said Allons, "in keeping me for years, if not for ever, out of five-and-twenty pounds, that I should have perhaps received, if I had remained in Liverpool. The family that I was to breakfast with were to sail for America this very noon, and are no doubt at sea by this time: the money I speak of they borrowed of me some weeks ago, and now perhaps my want of punctuality is as much the cause of my losing it as theirs."

"If it be only twenty-five pounds," said Peel, "Mr. Allons, so rich a man can afford to lose it, and so kind a man may rejoice that his friends have that sum added to their little capital, to begin farming in the new world."

At that moment a loud voice was heard in the hall, inquiring if Mr. Allons was here; and the next moment a rough-looking man entered the dining-room, without ceremony, and told him that he was his prisoner, placing at the same time a writ on the table for one hundred and twenty pounds.

"I don't owe so much in all Liverpool," said the astonished Allons. The officer then explained, that the sum was for goods purchased at a large shop the day before, by the family that Mr. Allons had introduced. Finding that the family had sailed that morning for America, the shopkeeper, who was a Jew, sent the demand to Mr. Allons; and because he was said to have gone by the steam carriage towards Manchester, it was sent after him in the form of a writ, and by the hands of an officer of arrest.

"Another sad effect this," said Mr. Morely, "of your besetting sin. Had you been punctual to your engagements, this might not have happened. I trust, however, it will be a warning to you for life, and that the loss of one hundred and twenty pounds may prevent the wreck of a fortune of as many thousands. On condition that you promise to take the warning now offered you, I will be your bail, or will even pay the officer the money."

Here the officer withdrew, assured of the safety of his writ, and supposing some private intercourse between the friends might be necessary. He was, however, soon told, that Mr. Allons preferred re-

turning with him to Liverpool, especially as the wind had shifted, and the vessel, with his slippery friends, might be driven back to the Mersey for another night.

Soon after his departure, the family separated, to fulfil their several engagements. We shall first accompany Mr. Morely and Peel in their rural excursion. It was to the house of a clergyman, about three miles off, to arrange with him for finishing Peel's education. The evening was remarkably fine and clear, and the walk abounded with some of the sweetest spots of that fine space of country, between Manchester and Stockport, on what is called the Lower Road. Peel had always been enthusiastic in praise of this walk; and his father, in former excursions, had enlivened the way by appropriate and affectionate remarks.

Now, however, Peel found him, not only silent. but remarkably thoughtful, and apparently sad. The youth took no notice of this till they came to a spot of surpassing beauty and richness. At every step the scene appeared to change for the better. At last they approached to an opening view of the river, and towards a fine natural

SEARS SC.

avenue of trees, slightly rising up a bank covered with some of the richest flowers of the season. A few deer had just gamboled away from their path, and several wild ducks at the same moment flew over their heads. The natural vivacity and ardour of Peel's mind could no longer be restrained; and, looking earnestly at his father, he said, "I am afraid dear Papa is not well, or why does he not enjoy, as he always did before, this lovely spot?"

"I am well, my beloved boy," he said; "but I am seriously thinking about that young cousin of yours, who has dined with us to-day."—"I knew you would be very sorry to see him go home with such a blackguard-looking fellow," said Peel: "if he keeps such company, I sha'nt wonder you are displeased with him."

Before Mr. Morely could explain the affair to his son, the Rector, who knew on what spot he should meet him at a certain minute, appeared in sight, and Peel was charged to be silent and circumspect.

We must now return, to follow, in another direction, Arkright and Marian. The brother had taken his sister's guitar, to enliven the walk as

well as the visit; but, though this made them saunter slowly along, they arrived earlier than they were expected. The family had walked out to meet them, but had taken a different path; and when the children reached the house, there was no one but a servant to receive them.

"We will go into the wood," said Arkright, "till our cousins return, and have a tune with the evening birds." They sat down on some trees that had been felled, and the first strain of the guitar brought a linnet upon a branch a few feet over their head. Marian stopped, and the bird began: she then gently touched the strings, till the sound blended with the notes of the linnet, and they proceeded in a most harmonious duet. Arkright at first looked up to their new chorister with silent rapture; but he soon felt the inspiration of the song and the scene, and joined with some of his best sounds.

Marian's tongue, till now, had been silent; but such was the impressive melody of the trio already engaged, that she ventured at last to join; and, as the cousins approached the spot, the sweetest chorus burst upon their ear.

They first beheld the linnet, and knew their fa-

vourite bird of the evening by its enchanting voice. "But where," they said to each other, "are the rest of the songsters? all are not birds—some are human, though soft and sweet as the softest and sweetest of the feathered race! and one sound, that now and then strikes louder than the others, is like that of the guitar!"

One of them now crept nearer, and then, turning back to the other, whispered—"'Tis our cousins Arkright and Marian!"—"Hush!" said the other, "and don't for the world disturb them. Let the delightful song go on—never did nature and art combine to produce such delicious harmony: if angels hear these tender strains, they must acquire new rapture, and, but for the fear of disturbing them, would swell the chorus with their own celestial voices."

When the song was over, the cousins embraced each other, and departed together for the house. The family residing in this retirement were an elder widowed sister of Mr. Morely, and her two daughters. Miss Cullum was nearly nineteen, and an object of very general and powerful attraction. Mr. Allons had often seen her, and, in addition to paying her marked attention whenever they met,

he had recently written to entreat that he might have the preference among her numerous admirers.

"Does he wish," she asked, "when she read this letter to her Mamma and Uncle, "to be allowed the refusal of me, just as an undecided applicant for a house or a horse wishes it to be reserved, till he has made up his mind whether it will suit him?" No one could undertake to answer this important question; nor was it a matter of any concern to Miss Cullum whether it could ever be answered or not. The fortune of Mr. Allons might have induced any one of ambition or avarice to strive to love him, or to believe that she did so without an effort: but this young lady had too much sense and spirit to allow her heart to be purchased or hardened by the most costly bribe; while her love of integrity would not permit her to profess an attachment to one who was not truly amiable in her sight. She therefore gave the preference to a young manufacturer of Stockport, of much higher character, though of inferior property and person.

This decision had just been sent to Liverpool, and reached Mr. Allons the morning after he re-

turned, under the care of the sheriff's officer, from Mr. Morely's, at Manchester.

"He dined with us to-day," said Marian, as they were conversing on this subject "and when he found we were coming here, he asked if I would bring a note to my cousin; but he never mentioned it afterwards, and I believe he forgot to write it."—"He was fetched away," said Arkright, "by a servant, on some sudden business about America. If he keeps such servants as that man is, I am sure Cousin need not wish to be his wife. I heard the man bluster and swear so, when he came into the hall at Papa's this morning, that I thought he was going to drag his master away, and to knock our servants down, with a little club that he had, for endeavouring to prevent him."—"Why, surely, my dear," said Mrs. Cullum, "it was the same man that called here in the morning, and inquired if Mr. Allons was in this house: I thought it an odd message, and was struck with his rough appearance and manners: I wondered what intimacy he could have with a rich young gentleman!"

Mr. Morely now drove the pony chaise to the gate, and desired his children to get in without

delay, that they might reach home before dark. The young folks, however, had proposed a different arrangement, and Mrs. Cullum had consented to it. "Allow the dear children," she said, "to stay here to-night, and take one of your nieces home with you in exchange." It was soon agreed that Miss Cullum should accompany Mr. Morely to Manchester, and that the exchange of children should be for a week instead of a night.

Almost as soon as the chaise went off, Mr. Morely, glad of the opportunity, said to his niece, "Well, my dear Bess, what have you done at last with Mr. Allons?"—"Completely rejected him, Uncle," she answered: "and I hope you will approve of the step. He appears to me to have no one recommendation but his fortune, and that has no charms for me; especially with an undecided weathercock man, who would never allow me to pursue any regular plan of usefulness with his property." Mr. Morely assured her of the pleasure that the news gave him; and then communicated, as mildly as truth would admit, the strange affair of the morning; adding, that he rejoiced at her mind having been decided to reject him, before she could possibly hear of it."

On reading Miss Cullum's letter, Mr. Allons vowed revenge, and immediately wrote to a lady, very differently minded, to declare his preference of her to her rival, Miss Cullum, and to appoint the next day to wait upon her and her father at Preston, for the final arrangement. He had settled the jeweller's bill, and released himself from all restraint. But, instead of making a wise use of his freedom, he at once rendered it a complete vacancy, in which he did nothing that he had purposed or promised to do, but only acted under the impulse of a sudden desire, or the attraction of an immediate pleasure. The spirit of revenge, that had inspired his letter to Preston, lasted but an hour or two after it had been despatched. Then his thoughts turned again upon Miss Cullum. She seemed to have additional charms, from the noble manner in which she had rejected him; and, after falling asleep with thinking of her, dreaming of her through a feverish night, and admiring her miniature the first thing in the morning, he resolved to see her without delay. "She has rejected me," he said, as he started from Manchester, "because I was arrested; I will now

convince her that the arrest was unjust, and that I am at liberty again."

In two hours the steam-carriage was at Manchester, where Mr. Allons, anxious to prove that he was free, first presented himself at the house of Mr. Morely. "And now," as soon as the usual salutations were over, he said, "I shall run a ride over to Mr. Cullum's, to see how the ladies are, and show them that I am no longer under restraint."

"I hoped," said Mr. Morely, "that Miss Cullum's letter would have saved you all further anxiety about her; but if you are determined to receive from her lips, what I find she has declared with her pen, you need go no farther—she is at present on a visit to Mrs. Morely."

Mrs. M. and Miss C. soon entered the room together, and a cheerful conversation commenced about the annoyance to which his fugitive friends had exposed him. "I ask pardon," said Miss Cullum, "for not condoling with you in my note; but in fact I knew nothing of the affair till several hours after I had sent it off."

"That," cried Mr. Allons, "is now all settled,

and I'll take care never to disregard punctuality again, I warrant ye. I'll be as exact as my good father's ancient stop-watch, that never deserted or deceived him, and will never desert or deceive me!"

In saying this, he put his hand to his fob, and found that his faithful servant had already escaped from his custody; but whether it still hung at his bed's head, or was in the keeping of a strange-looking man, who had sat remarkably close to him in the steam-carriage, he was uncertain.

Grieved as his friends were with his faults—hopeless as they were becoming of his amendment—they were not wanting in courtesy, and therefore he was invited to dinner. Miss Cullum's presence determined him at once to accept the invitation; and, the evening becoming stormy, he remained at Mr. Morely's all night.

Among Mr. M.'s letters the next morning, was one for Miss Cullum. It was from Preston, bitterly complaining that she had prevented Mr. Allons fulfilling a sacred engagement in that town, by drawing him to Manchester, and detaining as well as meeting him there.

"This is highly diverting," she said, as she

handed the letter to Mr. Morely. "I am accused of withholding from another the very man whom I have just peremptorily rejected. Instead of being here, it seems he had a solemn engagement thirty miles off. Bless the woman! she need not be so anxious about the careless butterfly."

Mr. Allons was requested to step into the room. "The trumpet of the steam-carriage has blown," he cried out, "and I must be gone: punctuality is the order of the day. I know what's the matter, and will go round to Preston, and set all to rights. Instead of this, he was persuaded by a gentleman in the steam-carriage to consent to accompany him to America. Arriving at Liverpool, he packed his trunks, and sent them on board the vessel; but delaying to follow them till it was too late, he lost his luggage and passage-money. He was soon tried in the King's Bench Court for breaking his promise of marriage, and had several thousand pounds' damages to pay. In fact, in less than six months after he came to the possession of his splendid fortune, half of it had disappeared through the neglect of *punctuality*.

PARLOUR STORIES.

No. XIV.

SENSIBILITY.

If parents are wise, they will send their children, daughters as well as sons, to those boarding-schools which have the best and most open gardens; not only for the blessing of free and fresh air, but also for the benefit of that delightful instruction to be derived from observing plants and flowers in all their varieties of kind, and season, and appearance.

Two young ladies, known but not related to each other, were placed at a school of this kind in Surrey, just as the garden had undergone its spring improvements, and had put on its most lovely clothing and colours. "Let our daughters," said their Mammas to the governess, when they took them,—"let our daughters have all the opportunity that your rules allow of being in the garden together, that they may assist one

another in understanding its fruits and flowers." The governess promised compliance; and, finding these little friends fond of the study of nature, as well as desirous of improving each other in the pursuit, she contrived to grant them rather more time in the garden than the rest of the scholars enjoyed, or perhaps wished.

Two or three months after they had entered, they stood by a sensitive plant, and thus began conversing about that tender production:—

JULIA HURST.—"How remarkable, my dear Agnes, it is that this little plant should droop its leaves every time one touches it; I am comparing it with that little sensitive child that came just after us; she drops her head whenever any one speaks to her. I spoke to her this morning as kindly as ever I could, and her little head dropped as usual: I touched this little plant as gently as possible, and the leaf dropped as low as ever."

AGNES CROFT.—"We will talk about your sensitive little girl by and by; at present let us look at your sensitive plant. If, as you say, it *dropped* its leaf, I fancy it is not the *proper* sensitive plant, for that seems to fold up its leaves, or at least to bring their sides closer together."

The Sensitive Plant

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JULIA.—"I did not know before that there were two kinds of sensitive plants. Can you distinguish them from each other without touching them? And can you find me out one of both sorts in this garden?"

AGNES.—"We have both sorts in our garden, at home; but I have not yet seen them here. I will look round, and I shall be able to distinguish before I touch them."

JULIA.—"I will walk with you, and see if I can find the other tender object out first. You say that the one I touched is not *properly* called the sensitive plant: pray what other name is ever given to it?"

AGNES.—"It belongs to what botanists call the same species as the sensitive plant; but they generally distinguish it as the *humble* plant, because it appears not to *shrink* with tenderness, so much as *fall* with humility."

JULIA.—"Now, I love that pretty distinction. It is so like your engaging method of describing different things; and then it gives us so much pleasure in the plants, because they seem to instruct us how to feel, and almost how to think."

AGNES.—"Yonder, I believe, is a fine *real* sen-

sitive plant. O yes! this is one of the largest and best I ever saw. One is almost ready to think that it must be strong enough not to fear a finger, and not to tremble at a touch; but I suppose it has all the timidity of its smaller and younger relations. Now you will see, my dear Julia, that it will not drop, but shrivel; that its leaf will not fall, but try to close itself up."

JULIA.—"Now, then, give it the fearful touch. How I should smile if it were stout enough not to fear, and were to remain stiff after you had touched it! But I see it is shrinking almost at the approach of your little finger; and now it tries to close its sides, like the strange shell-fish that your Papa showed us last winter."

Just then the youngest child of the governess screamed out, because the lap-dog had put out its tongue, and licked her arm. Agnes and Julia were nearest, and ran to its help: while one took away the dog, the other soothed the child, and was comforting it in the arbour before its Mamma could reach the spot.

"I am sorry, young ladies," said Mrs. Mordaunt, 'that you were so soon disturbed in your close attention to the plants; but there is half an

hour yet before dinner, and you may return, if you please, to the spot and the study which appeared so engaging."

An elder and rather envious scholar was just then trailing a little broken cart behind the arbour, and heard what the governess said. She dropped her plaything, came round to the front of the arbour, and asked, in an angry tone, why she had been so often scolded for touching those plants, and these new scholars were permitted to do what they pleased? Mrs. M. was displeased with such an ignorant and improper insinuation; but glad that an opportunity was given of explaining why she had forbidden some scholars, and encouraged others, to touch the sensitive plants. Agnes and Julia did not return to the plants: first, because it appeared to make Miss Froth jealous of them; but more because they wished to hear all that their governess had to say in her own and in their defence. The dialogue thus went on:—

Mrs. M.—"I wish every pupil of mine to know that I have no partiality, but where I find superior attention and improvement. My favourite scholars are those which, according to their age, are the most active and the most intel-

ligent. I wish Miss Froth particularly to know that she will always be encouraged, and even indulged, in proportion as she wishes to be instructed, and not merely amused. Now, let me ask her, why she ever wished to touch the sensitive plants?

Miss F.—"Because it is so funny to see them move, like living creatures, as soon as they are touched: because I am pleased so much to find them so altered for a little time, and then to go again and see that they are just the same as they *was* at first."

Mrs. M.—"They *were* at first, Miss Froth. Surely you are old enough to remember that the plural pronoun requires the plural verb to answer it. I hope I shall never have to correct that vulgar mistake again. There was another mistake *implied* in your answer. You said the plants moved like *living* creatures, as though the plants themselves had no life; but you have often been told that there is vegetable life, as well as animal and rational life; and a plant may be called a living creature as well as yourself, for it was as much *created* by God, and created with *life*, too. But your reasons for touching the plants are as

blameable as these errors of language in describing them. You touched the plants for mere play, and not for instruction; only to amuse your fancy, and not improve your mind. If I mistake not, you once handled the large plant roughly, and almost spoiled it, because you wished, you said, to make it dance."

Miss F.—"What knowledge is to be got from a garden? How can I improve my mind by sensitive plants, or by any other plants?"

Mrs. M.—"I have so often given you lessons on this subject, and you seem to have forgotten them, that I shall now give you over to your new and younger friends,—for friends, I am sure, they wish to be, and *are*, to you and to all of us."

Julia.—"We would not be enemies to Miss Froth, or to any one else, for the whole world. But, madam, I wish Miss Froth had been by, when Agnes explained to me, just now, the difference between the humble plant and the sensitive plant. Do, my dear Agnes, repeat the pretty lesson over again, and Miss Froth will, I am sure, love you, as Governess does, and as I do."

Mrs. Mordaunt smiled with delight at Julia's sweet simplicity and opening intelligence, and

encouraged Agnes to comply with her affectionate friend's request.

AGNES.—" Miss Froth is two years older than I am, and must know many things that I do not; and I shall be glad to hear them at any proper time, for my improvement. If I know anything about these plants, it is what my dear Papa has lately taught me; and I remember that *her* dear Papa has been in India several years, and could not teach her. It is because our dear Governess wishes it that I repeat what I said to Julia.

" There are two different plants. The smaller one is called the *humble* plant, because, when you touch it, the bottom of the leaf appears to become weak, and the leaf drops in a gentle manner, as if it were humbly bowing to the person that touched it. The larger one is properly the *sensitive* plant, and this does not drop and bow its head; but when it is touched it shrinks, as if it feared the finger, and tries to bring its tender sides closer to each other, as if it would make itself less, and be less hurt by the assault that is made upon it."

" This is all I said to Julia; but she said something to me that I have a great mind to tell."

" JULIA.—" O, I will tell myself. You have

told a longer tale about the plants than you told me, and perhaps you may tell a longer tale than I told you. I only said, then, when I touched the first plant,—' How remarkable it is that this little plant should drop its leaves every time one touches it. I am comparing it with that little sensitive child that came to school just after us. She drops her head when any one speaks to her. I spoke to her this morning as kindly as ever I could, and she dropped her little head as usual: just as I touched this little plant as gently as possible, and the leaf dropped as low as ever."

Miss Froth paid great attention to every word that was spoken. Her few ill qualities were more the effect of a neglected education, than of any particularly evil disposition; and perceiving that Agnes and Julia, as well as Mrs. Mordaunt, really wished to do her good and make her happy, she thanked them for their kindness, and then exclaimed,—" But what great *sensibility* must those plants have!"

Mrs. M.—" My dear Miss Froth, you must learn to distinguish between *sensibility*, which supposes reason, and belongs only to rational beings; and *sensitiveness*, which implies that

reason is absent, and may belong to plants as wel as inferior animals."

Miss F.—" I suppose, then, that the little dog that licked the arm of your sweet Miriam, just now, was *sensitive;* and the dear child herself was *sensible?*"

Mrs. M.—" That is a good example of the distinction, my dear: continue to think and speak in that cautious and careful manner, and you wil improve in all kinds of proper sensibility. But the clock has struck, and dinner must be ready."

In sitting down, three of the younger pupils were missing, and, on inquiring of the servants, Mrs. Mordaunt was told that, when the infant's scream brought several persons around it, two of the absent pupils were seen running away with the lap-dog towards the meadow at the back of the garden. At that moment Mr. Mordaunt came in, and asked if any one had seen his little son and nephew within the last hour? Neither servants nor pupils could give any account of the direction the little boys had taken. Some anxiety was felt because the dinner-bell had rung, and no one could see the most distant appearance of one of the fugitives returning at the well-known and wel-

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come summons. Some relief was felt from the general conclusion, that, wherever the children were gone, it was likely they were together.

A servant was sent down each lane leading from the house, while Mr. and Master Mordaunt took different directions across the fields. Until their return, no dinner could be eaten, nor any relief from painful anxiety be obtained. That quickness of sensation and delicacy of affection that we mean by the word *sensibility*, were now remarkably manifested through the whole school. Mrs. Mordaunt, ever tenderly anxious about her pupils, was seen to shed a tear; and instantly every eye was full, and every heart beat quickly and violently. Each young lady was anxious to go somewhere in search of the little wanderers; but Mrs. Mordaunt forbade it,—more fearful of the searchers not returning, than hopeful of their finding the objects of their anxiety.

At last, after Master Mordaunt had walked, or rather run, more than a mile, he found the whole five children on a bank, at the other side of a thick wood, gathering flowers, as they said, to bring home a present to Julia and Agnes. The lap-dog was frisking about among them, much delighted

with their employment, but apparently aware of the time of dinner, and anxious for them to return.

With admirable presence of mind, Master Mordaunt climed up one of the highest trees, and took a long branch, to which he tied his handkerchief, and waved it, shouting in token of his success. This soon brought Mr. Mordaunt to the spot, and as quickly as possible they brought the young ramblers home. Dinner was soon despatched, because it was Thursday, and the evening of that day was generally set apart for some *amusing* instruction. This evening, the first of Mrs. More's "Sacred Dramas" was to be recited—we will not say performed, by a sufficient number of the young ladies, assisted by Master Mordaunt, a fine youth of eleven years old. They had studied their several parts with great care, and had rehearsed them to their governess, separately and with each other, with almost perfect correctness. The other pupils had also been busy in preparing a proper place in the garden for the action of the drama, and, especially, in making a little cradle for the infant Moses to lie in.

One corner of a lovely lawn, close to a clear and flowing stream, was so planted as to represent

the rushy bank of the Nile; and from another corner, not far off, went a winding grove of beautiful trees, down which Pharoah's daughter was to come to the brink of the river, and discover the child.

Miss Froth had been left out of the first arrangement, and on that account had refused to assist in the preparation of the scenes; but the conversation in the arbour had restored her to perfect good humour, so that she now cheerfully offered her help in whatever she could do. Mrs. M., Agnes, and Julia, also begged that she might be employed in the procession. The half-hour before tea was appointed to settle the final plan, and she was kindly requested to be present.

The part of Pharoah's daughter had been given by unanimous consent to Miss Synge, the elder scholar, and whose fine figure and voice, as well as superior sense, admirably fitted her for the royal character. *Jochebed*, the mother of Moses, was undertaken by a niece of Mr. Mordaunt's. She had early lost her mother, and was on that account what Dr. Johnson would have called "sorrowfully thoughtful;" which suited her to the melancholy parts of that affecting character. *Mi-*

riam was at the first given to a young lady of the name of Penton, of very sprightly and amiable qualities; but, as the illness of her Mamma obliged her to go suddenly home, Agnes Croft was requested by every one to undertake it. Master Mordaunt was, of course, Amran, the father of Moses; while Miss Froth was asked to be the chief attendant of the Princess, and bear the infant, at her command, from the river to the palace.

The chief difficulty had been to find a little *Moses*. It was at first proposed to substitute a doll, properly dressed; but all parties wished for a living infant, and the cradle had been fitted up with the greatest care, in the hope of obtaining one. The gardener's wife, living in a cottage by the meadow gate, had a strong and sweet little boy, about five weeks old. With Mrs. M.'s consent, the woman was asked to lend her child for the occasion, and to come herself to see that it was not hurt. The weather was remarkably warm, the evenings fine and clear, and no danger to the infant was to be apprehended; consent was therefore given, and a proper dress for a little Moses was soon provided. The child was to be baptized

the next Sunday, and the name of Moses was given to it. The reader will smile at hearing, that its parents' name was WATERS!

The performance, if it must be called so, passed off to the great satisfaction of a number of friends, whom Mr. and Mrs. Mordaunt had invited on the lawn to witness it. All regretted that Master Mordaunt's part was so short, he delivered his lines in such a fine and an impressive tone. *Jochebed* was so truly affecting, that it hardly seemed an illusion; it appeared for the time a perfect reality. Miss Synge was a complete Egyptian Princess, in every thing but the true British rose colour of her striking countenance. Miss Froth conducted herself with great propriety, in the short but conspicuous part she had to act.

But how shall we speak of *Miriam?* Agnes Croft gave to that chief character of the drama the most sweet and powerful effect. The manner in which she spoke the beautiful lines—

"With what compassion! with what angel sweetness!
She bends to look upon his infant face!
She takes him in her arms! she blesses, kisses him!
The Princess *will* protect him! bless her, heaven!
But stop, my tongue; thy transports will betray me"—

Was beyond all praise, and drew forth a burst of

applause from the delighted company. The other lines of the part were given with admirable propriety; and the manner in which she went from the presence of the Princess, to fetch the mother of Moses to be his nurse, was so true to nature, as to create a fear, that Miss Croft might be tempted by her talents to try her fortune on the stage.

"There is no great fear of that," said Agnes to Mr. Mordaunt, when they were seated in the saloon, and he expressed his hope that she might never be induced to perform more publicly than she had done this evening. "It was partly your fault," she cheerfully added, "that I appeared upon the lawn stage at all. I was a plain retired English girl till you made a Hebrew of me, and if you please, I will go up to my room, and throw off the Israelite, and come down English again."

Mr. M.—"I believe, from my heart, my dearest Agnes, that you are, and ever will be, 'an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile.'"

The conversation having taken this turn, the young ladies all expressed their wish to be allowed to remain in the room a little longer, to enjoy the benefit of Mr. Mordaunt's advice. Even Miss

Froth became earnest in entreating him to speak much to them.

Just then a loud knock, and some bustle at the door opening to the lawn, rather alarmed them. It was to request that a young lady, who had been overcome by the performance, might be allowed to wait in the house till a chaise could be fetched to convey her home. She had been seen to turn pale with fainting as Miriam was speaking, and to be led to the arbour just before the drama was closed. Fearful of her taking cold, her friends now brought her to the house, and Mr. Mordaunt insisted upon her lying on the sofa till she was sufficiently recovered to be taken home with safety. The carriage soon arrived, and what at first created some alarm, became an occasion of some interesting conversation, which lasted till a later hour than either the family or the pupils were generally out of their beds.

Mr. Mordaunt took this favourable opportunity of addressing the young ladies on the exquisite sensibility of many well-formed and well-furnished minds. "How quick," he said, "are their perceptions! how tender are their sensations! and how delicate are all their faculties and feelings!

I have often seen that young lady ready to faint at the Chapel of Ease, when prayers have been reading, as well as during a pathetic sermon. There are certain lessons and psalms which have so much and so often affected her, that I have sometimes wished I could omit them when I have seen her present. I observed her, while the drama was proceeding on the lawn this evening, and I feared, from my general knowledge of her, as well as her particular appearance at the time, that she would be unable to endure all the pointed and powerful appeals of that impressive composition."

"I am sorry," said his niece, "that our amusement should have given pain to any one, especially to one of so truly amiable a character as that lady bears in this neighbourhood."

"I am not quite certain," answered Mr. Mordaunt, "that the lady has suffered much pain from your amusement. I am more inclined to think that she enjoyed much pleasure—solemn pleasure, I grant; but still pleasure. If the incidents had been real, and not imaginary; or if she could have witnessed the events of the sacred history as they actually occurred, such a mind as hers would undoubtedly have been pained to torture,

until the full disclosure of the miracle—the full manifestation of the deliverance, came in to her relief." But there is a mysterious pleasure in witnessing the most tragic imitations of human action, even while they move us to pity and sorrow."

Mr. Mordaunt here took his watch, and said that he considered it too late to continue the conversation. "I may be able," he added, "to obtain for you the outline of this lady's history, and if so, it will furnish a theme for some future evening."

For this conversation our readers are referred to a subsequent tale, entitled "Sympathy."

PARLOUR STORIES.

No. XV.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

The boys of Mr. Ruler's school petitioned, one fine May morning, for a holyday; and, as they had lately been very diligent, he was inclined to grant it; but he thought proper to require some effort on their part as the price of the boon. He therefore said, "At twelve o'clock you shall all leave school for the day, if the first four boys who have signed the petition repeat something they have read, worth hearing, upon a subject that I shall give them."—"What is the subject, Sir?" asked the eldest boy. "The subject," answered Mr. Ruler, "shall be the feeling that is at this moment uppermost in all your minds—Hope. Let me, before twelve, or before eleven o'clock, hear some good lines from the first four boys on Hope, and you shall then all be free for the day."

"May we look into a book, and learn some

ines?" asked Master Orger, the third boy on the list, but one of the dullest in the school. "I told you," answered Mr. Ruler, "that you must repeat some lines that you *have* read, and can remember; but, as you have such a dislike to poetry, I will soften the condition in your favour: you may mention some fact or anecdote on the same subject. Master Edwards, too, the fourth name, may, if he please, have the same indulgence."—"Thank you, Sir," said little Edwards; "but I think I shall prefer saying something poetical about *hope*." He was a witty boy, and fond of quotations; the rest therefore expected something from him that would send them from school laughing.

By this time Master Manning, the eldest boy, was ready, and, standing up in the middle of the school, he recited the following beautiful lines:—

"What is hope? the beauteous sun,
Which colours all it shines upon:
The beacon of life's dreary sea,
The star of immortality!
Fountain of feelings young and warm,
A day-beam, bursting through the storm;
A tone of melody, whose birth
Is far too sweet, too pure, for earth;
A blossom of that radiant tree,
Whose fruit the angels only see!

A beauty, and a charm, whose power
Is seen, enjoyed, confess'd, each hour;
A portion of that world to come,
When earth and ocean meet the last o'erwhelming doom."

"Excellent!" said Mr. Ruler: "if all succeed so soon and so well as Master Manning, you will be free by ten o'clock. Now let us hear if Master Ellard is ready?"

Master Ellard stood up and spoke as follows:—

"Oh! whence the beam that shoots along?
Why shrink aghast the hostile throng?
Lo! from amidst affliction's night,
Hope bursts, all radiant, on the sight:
Her words the troubled bosom soothe.
Why thus dismay'd?
Though foes invade,
Hope ne'er is wanting to their aid,
Who tread the path of truth.
'Tis I, who smooth the rugged way,
I, who close the eyes of sorrow,
And with glad visions of to-morrow
Repair the weary soul's decay.
When death's cold touch thrills to the freezing heart,
Dreams of heaven's opening glories I impart;
Till the freed spirit springs on high,
In rapture too intense for weak mortality."

"I am pleased," said Mr. Ruler, "that any of my pupils should study Beattie's fine writings; I wish all of you to become acquainted with his

poems, especially. But I will not detain such good boys from their rural holyday: come, Master Orger, prose or poetry, let us hear you.

"Alexander the Great, being chosen by the Grecian States their Captain-General in the war with Persia, made himself well acquainted with the condition and character of his numerous officers. As he approached the end of his grand career, he gave a kingdom to one officer, a province to another, a city to a third, a town to a fourth, a village to a fifth, and smaller portions to some of the rest. Parmenio, his Lieutenant, ventured to ask him what he had reserved for himself, when he answered—HOPE."

"The anecdote is old, and well known," said Mr. Ruler; "but we must all be well pleased with the manner in which you have repeated it. Now comes Master Edwards's turn, and then the holyday. What is hope, Master Edwards?" The little boy put on one of his drollest countenances, and then quoted the singular description that Cowley gives of it:—

"Hope is the brother of fear, more gaily glad,
The merrier fool of the two, but quite as mad."

The loudest applause, from all parts of the school followed Master Edwards's quaint repetition of these lines, and the desired holyday commenced.

The school consisted of twelve boarders, all well disposed towards each other, but divided into little friendly parties, as a likeness of age, or temper, or pursuit, suggested.

"I should like to go to the Temple Farm," said Ellard, "and examine the outside of the famous ruin: who is of the same mind?" Two of the junior boys, one of them named Barham, the son of a lover of antiquity, agreed to go with Ellard.

"There is a camp of gipsies at the farther end of the common," said Edwards: "I want to talk a little with them, but I don't like to go alone; who will go with me?"—"Little Fear wants some gay and merry brother Hope to attend him," said Howard: "I happen to be dressed as gayly, and I am as merry, as any of you; I will therefore be his body-guard, and join him in—

"Whistling aloud to keep his courage up."

Who will go with Edwards and me to the camp?"—"I will," said two or three of the younger boys, when they found that "Howard the tall," as they called him, was to be the leader of the party.

SEARS

Manning and Orger agreed to take their trap, and have a game on the heath, and invited the remaining unemployed to go with them, and join in the sport. The latter consented, if they might first be allowed to go into a neighbouring wood, and see if they could find a few blackberries ripe enough to eat. "Set off, ye children of the wood," said Orger; "but take care and engage the birds decently to bury you, if you should chance to be killed."

The young fellows ran off towards the wood, while Manning and Orger sauntered after them. "I am half inclined," said Orger, looking aside in that direction, "to follow Edwards and Howard to the gipsy camp; I can be back soon enough for a game at trap."—"Nonsense," said Manning; "let us both go gently into the wood, and frighten the children. Yonder," he added, pointing after them, "they go, as merry as larks; we can soon persuade them that they are in danger, and then we can run to their help."

In a few minutes they saw them at a distance, reaching after what they thought to be blackberries, when Manning sounded a loud whistle that he had bought that morning, and its echoes resounded

through the wood in such a piercing and powerful manner, that the boys fell down amidst the briers, almost frightened to death. Orger, at the same moment, roared in a rough voice that he could well assume, and threatened death to every one who should be found in the wood.

"We must take care of ourselves, then," said Manning; and scarcely had he uttered the words, before a snare caught their feet, and they could not move a single step. In this ludicrous position, they were found by the little boys, as they were running out of the wood, and soon released. The proud spirits of Manning and Orger were considerably lowered, upon finding themselves indebted for deliverance from real danger to the boys, whom they had so dreadfully alarmed with the apprehension of an imaginary one. They all shook hands, however, and prepared for the game they at first agreed upon.

Just as the first party came within sight of the fine ruin of the Temple Farm, a heavy cloud, driven by a gust of wind from some distant corner of the heavens, appeared almost over their heads, and they felt some heavy drops pattering upon the wide top surface of their hussar caps. "How

unfortunate," said Ellard, "is this! who could have thought of this disappointment!" Scarcely had he spoken the words when the rain began to pour down, and the boys were obliged to run into the first barn, behind the ruin, for shelter.

Hope supported them for a few minutes, and they shook the heavy drops from their clothes, in preparation for viewing the ruin when the cloud had passed away. But it was not a solitary cloud, or one of a few: the sky became completely black, and the air darkened with rain; so that, after more than an hour spent in the barn, they gave up their favourite object, and every other pursuit of pleasure for that day, in despair.

"Why, Master Barham!" said a young man, at work in a corner of the barn, "is it you? I didn't know you before, it became so dark: I am sure my father and mother will be glad to see you in doors, and to dinner, too: there's a smoking meat pudding upon the table, at least there was just now, and you shall all go in and have some, if you please, for you must be hungry." Their hunger and their hope thanked the young farmer heartily, and he took them across the yard, over their shoes in dirt, into the house.

The farmer was glad to see the son of his old friend Barham, and told his young companions that they were welcome for his sake. "I only wish," he said, "you had been here a quarter of an hour sooner, for we had a fine hot pudding, that we managed to eat up, and I am afraid now there is nothing but bread and cheese in the house."

The youths could scarcely conceal their sorrow for this fresh disappointment. Had the farmer and his son been silent about the pudding, the bread and cheese might have been welcome; or had they praised its goodness less, or not praised it at all, the boys might not have grieved over the loss of a coarse farmer's dinner; but now it appeared thrice as excellent as it really was, and they would have given up three *such* holydays for one such dinner, or such a wet and hungry day.

We must now follow the second party to the gipsies' camp. It was more than a mile across the heath, and the boys were wet through before they had gone half the way. What were they to do? To return would be as bad as to go on. They might get shelter in the camp, and dry their clothes by the gipsies' good fires. The rain might

then clear off, and the afternoon be fine for some sport.

They went on, but in a sad condition. Howard's gay clothes were spoiled, and Edwards's high spirit was drooping; and their younger companions were so tired, that they must all stop, and rest under an oak, which scarcely sheltered them from either wind or rain. At last they reached the camp, and were cheered with seeing three tents large enough to hold them, and thick enough to keep them dry. But they saw no smoke—they smelt no fire—they heard no noise, but the barking of a dog. The gipsies had left their tents for the day, after closing them up, and fastening a large dog to guard them.

The disappointment of the youths was now extreme; but the spirits of Edwards and Howard still kept up. They went back to the oak as fast as they could, and there stood waiting for the rain to cease. "Edwards," said Howard, "I begin to think with Cowley and you, that Hope is the brother of Fear, and not his enemy and conqueror. The fool was merry enough in the morning, and gayly clothed; but he was certainly mad

to come so far from home, for the chance of being barked at, and wetted to the skin."

This pleased little Edwards, and roused him to something like his usual cheerfulness. "I wonder," he said, "where our sentimental schoolfellows are! Let me see, they went to the Temple: Barham, I suppose, went to interpret the ruin: we shall hear some of their ancient and sacred notions at night, if we get home safe." The younger boys were just going to cry, with the fear of being out all night, when a young man in a cart, some distance behind the oak, called out, "I shall go by your school, young gentlemen, and you can ride home." Delighted with this news, the boys ran into the lane, and did not observe that the horse stood in an opposite direction to their home. They jumped into the cart, and, covering themselves with some sacking, were soon shaken to sleep.

"I say," cried the young man, when they had gone more than a mile, "here is a gang of gipsies, you may like to see them." They had passed the camp asleep, and now they awoke they were half a mile beyond it: the gipsies were returning

to kindle their fires, and cook their supper. "Why, how is this?" said Edwards; here is another disappointment: we are going wrong, young man."—"You belong to Mr. Masters' school, don't you?" he asked. "No," said Howard, "to Mr. Ruler's, to be sure."—"Then, to be sure," replied the boy, "you be wrong, and a mile and a half further from home than when I picked you up: I am very sorry for the mistake."

Mr. Masters was jealous of Mr. Ruler, whose school was younger and better than his own: and when he was told that three or four of Mr. Ruler's pupils had arrived at his gate, his first thought was that they were come to be his pupils; and he went out to lift them from the cart with great cheerfulness. "My dear children," he said, "you must be very wet—let me lift you down—Jenny, make a large fire, and get some clean linen. I feel greatly for your condition, young gentlemen—how came your very kind parents to send you on such a day; but the morning was very fine; and we shall soon get you dry and comfortable."

"We are very much obliged to you, Sir," said Howard, who knew Masters's jealous and fawning

character, "but we must not stop, for Mr. Ruler will think we are lost. The two little ones, indeed, upon second thought, may stop, if you will be so good as take them in for one night—I am sure Mr. Ruler would do the same for your boys at any time; but Edwards and I must go back, if we walk all the way."

Masters now lost all his good-nature. His disappointment provoked him beyond measure. "I am afraid," he said angrily, "we have no room for the boys for one night. Mr. Ruler must know that my school is always full, and that it must be difficult—impossible—for me to give a single boy, however small, a single night's accommodation between the quarters." He then went into the house, grumbling something that could not be heard, except the words, mortifying, insulting.

"If we had been his pupils," said Edwards, "he would have taken us all in, big as some of us are, though it is between the quarters; but never mind, perhaps the young man will allow us to hire him to take us home?" The bargain was made for a shilling a-piece, and they were safely home by dusk.

The game of the third party was, of course,

soon over, if ever the rain had suffered it to begin. But how did they escape?

A poor woman was coming across the heath, and they asked her where they could soonest obtain shelter? She was evidently depressed, but she answered them with great kindness, that her cottage was as near as any one she knew, and if they would go with her, they should stop there, *if she could get in.* The woman had been weeping; but they thought it was from the weather, and her fatigue. Manning, however, took notice of her last words, and the faint tone in which she uttered them. "If *she* could get in!" he said to himself: can she have any doubt of getting into her own cottage: at all events, we will help her."

The woman was returning from a small town, about three miles off, to see if she could prevent her goods being taken for half a year's rent. The execution was to go over that day, and she knew not but the few things she had might already be gone, and the cottage, in which she had been born, locked against her. As they came near it, a rough-looking man was standing by the door, waiting for her return. He knew her, and said,

"I am almost wet through stopping here for you: I must have the rent immediately, or the goods."

How glad would Master Manning have been of the pounds he had spent in waste, at this moment! "Who," said he, "has got any money?" They could furnish but six or seven shillings between them, which the man said he must have for his day's work. "But then," said Orger, "you wo'nt take the poor woman's goods?"—"But I must, indeed," answered the man, "and that directly; so give me the key, mistress, or I will break the door open." It was in vain to think of resisting; disappointment attended every thing: so the youths left their money and the woman behind them, and set off home, wet as they were.

The party from the Temple were first at Mr. Ruler's; then Master Manning and his companions; and last, the visitors to the gipsy camp. "The subject of this morning," said Mr. Ruler, when they assembled in the parlour for evening prayer, was HOPE; the subject of this evening is DISAPPOINTMENT. The weather of the morning was favourable to hope, and you could not be blamed for indulging it: the change in the weather has produced the change in your feelings

and rendered our evening subject so different from that of the morning. But let me ask, have you met with no adventures to entertain us with, and that we may turn to some good account? Your dangers are all over now, and we may talk of them without fear. Master Manning, you are the oldest, let us have your journal first."

Manning related the affair of the poor woman, with correctness and feeling, and concluded his tale by a fear that she was now without a roof to shelter her. "I hope differently," said Mr. Ruler; "and I have reason to believe that she is taken care of for this night: however, something more must be done for her, and I shall give you all an opportunity of contributing, to get back her goods, and return to her cottage."

"I shall not be sorry for the rain, and for the loss of a game at trap," said Orger, "if we have an opportunity of doing good to the kind old creature."

"I like that sentiment," answered Mr. Ruler, "and I hope it is the sentiment of all of you. Had you been playing at trap, you would not have met with the unfortunate woman; you would not have had these good feelings of pity and sympathy

excited for her—you would perhaps have known nothing of her, and had no opportunity of relieving her. It seems, then, that the rain has done some good to her, and to you, as well as to the earth; and we must not too deeply deplore your disappointment of a holyday."

"Have you met with any adventure of importance, Ellard?" said Mr. Ruler. "You have been, I believe, with Barham, to the Temple Farm; what did you see there?" Ellard related all that had passed under their notice, and nothing more; had the pudding been visible, he would have mentioned it; but as it had fled before their arrival, he was silent about it.

"How long did you stay at Farmer Hays'?" asked Mr. Ruler; "and when did you leave the premises?" The boys answered these questions as accurately as they could, remarking that they should have stayed to see the fine ruin of the Temple after they left the farm, if the ground had not been covered with water. "I am glad, indeed, it was so," said Mr. Ruler; "for, if it had not, I I fear you would soon have been covered with earth."

The boys wondered what their master could mean. "I have just heard," he said, "that the

The Boys relating their days adventures

large top stone of the ruin fell down, just at the time that you would have been looking at it, and crushed two poor cows to death on the very spot where you would have stood." The youth remembered that they faintly heard a crash in that direction, when they were more than half a mile on their way home. "Here is another proof," said Mr. Ruler, "that what is called disappointment may prove more welcome than we at first imagine. You *might* have escaped had the weather been fine; but the rain removed you from the post and possibility of danger."

Edwards was now asked for an account of his and his companion's wanderings. He related all their disasters with a humorous smile, but still with great feeling and effect. "I am sorry," said Mr. Ruler, "you suffered so much fatigue and disappointment; but it seems that what you did suffer, prevented much greater suffering. If the rain had not come on, the gipsies would have been in their tents: they went across a couple of fields to shelter themselves in an old deserted building, where they made a fire and dined. Then you probably would have gone near them, and caught

the disease—some say it is the cholera morbus, that they have spread wherever they went. If they had left their tents open, you would have gone under them to shelter yourselves, and might still have caught the infection. Your disappointment, therefore, has not been a great calamity."

After a few minutes' silence, Mr. Ruler intimated that he had one question more to ask:—Whether some of them had not been in the wood? "I must insist," he said, "upon knowing what took place there." The little boys deplored their disappointment, in not being allowed their feast of blackberries; while Manning and Orger confessed that they had been caught, though not in *their own snare.*

We must now turn a moment's attention to Dame Harlow, the poor ejected woman, and witness the disappointment of her oppressor. She had paid her rent regularly for thirty years, and was now but a few weeks beyond the quarter-day; but her landlord was a friend of Masters, and she had lately been employed at Mr. Ruler's. These facts are sufficient to account for the distress to which she was suddenly reduced.

When Mr. Ruler had finished the address to his pupils which has just been noticed, he asked them how much they could spare, from their charity allowance, towards the recovery of her goods. Every one was eager to subscribe; and, with a liberal sum from Mr. and Mrs. Ruler, sufficient was raised for the purpose. It was taken to the proper officer the next morning, and before evening Dame Harlow was again in her cottage.

One more instance of disappointment must bring our tale to an end. Masters reported that three or four of Mr. Ruler's pupils had been among the gipsies, and must have caught the disorder, and carried it into the school. He succeeded so far in his scheme as to persuade two or three families, not far from the neighbourhood, to order their children home without delay.

Mr. Ruler was at first ignorant to whom he was indebted for this injury; but, finding that one of the youths was to stop at Masters', he suspected him to be the author, and took measures accordingly. The young man that drove the little party home was summoned, and declared, upon his oath, that not one of them had seen a single gipsy, till

he had roused them from sleep to look at the tribe, at a furlong distance.

Edwards and Howard also assured the parents of the boys that this was the fact. The affair ended in the return of all the youths to Mr. Ruler's; and Masters, his envious adversary, was completely disappointed.

THE END.

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